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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY HBS DATE 5/21/82

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MCAP, KS, KN, US

SUBJECT: SECDEF PRESS CONFERENCE: PUBLIC AFFAIRS GUIDANCE
1. IF ASKED YOU MAY CONFIRM THAT INTERCHANGE BELOW TOOK PLACE DURING JUNE 20, 1975 SECDEF PRESS CONFERENCE. YOU SHOULD MAKE NO FURTHER COMMENT.

Q: WILL THE UNITED STATES USE NUCLEAR WEAPONS AGAINST NORTH KOREA IF THEY INVADE SOUTH KOREA?
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A: AS I INDICATED EARLIER, WE CANNOT FORECLOSE ANY OPTION. WE HAVE DEPLOYED IN KOREA THE TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS AS IS, I BELIEVE, WELL KNOWN. I THINK THAT IT WOULD DEPEND UPON THE JUDGMENT OF THE LEADERSHIP UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES BUT WE HAVE NOW GONE SINCE 1945 WITHOUT ANY NUCLEAR WEAPON BEING DETONATED IN ANGER AND WE WOULD STRONGLY HOPE THAT THAT HISTORICAL RECORD IS MAINTAINED. IF CIRCUMSTANCES WERE TO REQUIRE THE USE OF TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS, OF COURSE, I THINK THAT THAT WOULD BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED, BUT THE GROUND FORCES BALANCE IN THE KOREA PENINSULA IS NOT UNSATISFACTORY. SISCO